

Institute for Public Representation
Georgetown Law
600 New Jersey Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20001
202.662.9535 (phone)
202.662.9634 (fax)



November 26, 2012

via hand delivery

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW, Room TW-A325
Washington, DC 20554

FILED/ACCEPTED

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Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary

Attn: CGB Room 3-B431

**Re: Broadway Baptist Church Petition for Exemption from the
Commission's Closed Captioning Rules
Case No. CGB-CC-0182
CG Docket No. 06-181**

Dear Ms. Dortch:

Pursuant to the Commission's Request for Comment, Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Inc. (TDI), the National Association of the Deaf (NAD), the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Consumer Advocacy Network (DHHCAN), the Association of Late-Deafened Adults (ALDA), California Coalition of Agencies Serving the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (CCASDHH), and the Cerebral Palsy and Deaf Organization (CPADO), collectively, "Consumer Groups," respectfully submit this opposition to the petition of Broadway Baptist Church ("Broadway") to exempt its programming from the Commission's closed captioning rules, 47 C.F.R. § 79.1.¹ Consumer Groups oppose

¹ *Public Notice, Request for Comment: Request for Exemption from Commission's Closed Captioning Rules*, CG Docket No. 06-181 (October 26, 2012), http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DA-12-1729A1.pdf; *Broadway Petition for Exemption*, Case No. CGB-CC-0182, CG Docket No. 06-181 (January 24, 2012), <http://apps.fcc.gov/ecfs/document/view?id=7021857192> ("*Broadway Petition*"). The Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau initially determined that the *Broadway Petition* was deficient. *Letter from the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau*, Case No. CGB-CC-

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the petition because it does not sufficiently demonstrate that Broadway has diligently sought out the most reasonable price for captioning its programming, that it cannot afford to caption its programming, or that it has exhausted all alternative avenues for captioning.

Consumer Groups acknowledge Broadway's efforts to "allo[w] those who cannot attend a service the privilege of worship."² Broadway's requested exemption, however, would deny equal access to its programming to community members who are deaf or hard of hearing. Maximizing accessibility through the comprehensive use of closed captions is critical to ensuring that all viewers can experience the important benefits of video programming on equal terms.

Because the stakes are so high for the millions of Americans who are deaf or hard of hearing, it is essential that the Commission grant petitions for exemptions from captioning rules only in the rare case that a petitioner conclusively demonstrates that captioning its programming would impose a truly untenable economic burden. To make such a demonstration, a petitioner must present detailed, verifiable, and specific documentation that it cannot afford to caption its programming, either with its own revenue or with alternative sources.

Under section 713(d)(3) of the Communications Act of 1934 ("1934 Act"), as added by the Telecommunications Act of 1996 Act ("1996 Act")³ and amended by section 202(c) of the 21st Century Communication and Video Accessibility Act of 2010

0182, CG Docket No. 06-181 (April 4, 2012), <http://apps.fcc.gov/ecfs/document/view?id=7021907492> ("CGB Letter"). Broadway then filed a supplement. *Broadway Supplement*, Case No. CGB-CC-0182 (June 13, 2012), <http://apps.fcc.gov/ecfs/document/view?id=7021923601>. The CGB wrote a second letter asking Broadway for additional information. *CGB Letter II*, Case No. CGB-CC-0182 (July 25, 2012), <http://apps.fcc.gov/ecfs/document/view?id=7022004570>. Broadway then filed another supplement. *Broadway Supplement II*, Case No. CGB-CC-0182 (Sept. 3, 2012), <http://apps.fcc.gov/ecfs/document/view?id=7022022123>

² *Broadway Petition* at 1.

³ Pub. L. 104-104, 110 Stat. 56 (codified as amended at 47 U.S.C. § 613(d)(3)).

("CVAA"),⁴ "a provider of video programming or program owner may petition the Commission for an exemption from the [closed captioning] requirements of [the 1934 Act], and the Commission may grant such petition upon a showing that the requirements . . . would be economically burdensome." In its July 20, 2012 Report and Order, the Commission formally adopted the analysis set forth in its October 20, 2011 Interim Standard Order and Notice of Proposed Rulemaking.⁵ In doing so, the Commission interpreted the term "economically burdensome" as being synonymous with the term "undue burden" as defined in section 713(e) of the 1934 Act and ordered the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau to continue to evaluate all exemption petitions using the "undue burden" standard pursuant to the Commission's amended rules in 47 C.F.R. § 79.1(f)(2)-(3).⁶

To satisfy the requirements of section 713(e), a petitioner must first demonstrate its inability to afford providing closed captions for its programming.⁷ If a petitioner sufficiently demonstrates an inability to afford captioning, it must also demonstrate that

⁴ Pub. L. 111-260, 124 Stat. 2751 (codified at 47 U.S.C. § 613(d)(3)).

⁵ The *Interim Standard Order* and the *NPRM* were part of a multi-part Commission decision. See *Anglers for Christ Ministries, Inc., New Beginning Ministries, Petitioners Identified in Appendix A, Interpretation of Economically Burdensome Standard; Amendment of Section 79.1(f) of the Commission's Rules; Video Programming Accessibility*, Memorandum Opinion and Order, Order, and Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, CG Docket Nos. 06-181 and 11-175, 26 FCC. Rcd. 14941 (Oct. 20, 2011) ("*Anglers 2011*").

⁶ *Report and Order, Interpretation of Economically Burdensome Standard; Amendment of Section 79.1(f) of the Commission's Rules; Video Programming Accessibility*, CG Docket No. 11-175, ¶ 8 (July 20, 2012) ("*Economically Burdensome Standard Order*"). In some early adjudications, the Commission specifically analyzed exemption petitions under the four-factor rubric in section 713(e), analyzing whether each of the four factors weighed for or against granting a particular petition. *E.g., Home Shopping Club L.P.*, Case No. CSR 5459, 15 FCC Rcd. 10,790, 10,792-94 ¶¶ 6-9 (CSB 2000). Over the past decade, however, this factor-based analysis has evolved into several specific evidentiary requirements that must be satisfied to support a conclusion that a petitioner has demonstrated an undue economic burden sufficient to satisfy the requirements of section 713(e). See *Anglers 2011*, 26 FCC Rcd. at 14,955-56, ¶ 28.

⁷ See *Anglers 2011*, 26 FCC Rcd. at 14,955-56, ¶ 28.

it has exhausted alternative avenues for obtaining assistance with captioning.⁸ Where a petition fails to make either of those showings, it fails to demonstrate that providing captions would be economically burdensome, and the Commission must dismiss the petition.⁹

I. Broadway's Ability to Afford Captioning

To sufficiently demonstrate that a petitioner cannot afford to caption its programming, a petition must provide both verification that the petitioner has diligently sought out and received accurate, reasonable information regarding the costs of captioning its programming, such as competitive rate quotes from established providers, and detailed information regarding the petitioner's financial status.¹⁰ Both showings must demonstrate that the petitioner in fact cannot afford to caption its programming and eliminate the possibility that captioning would be possible if the petitioner reallocated its resources or obtained more reasonable price quotes for captioning its programming.

A. The Cost of Captioning Broadway's Programming

To successfully demonstrate that captioning would be economically burdensome, a petitioner must demonstrate a concerted effort to determine "the most reasonable price" for captioning its programming.¹¹ To allow the Commission and the public to evaluate whether a petitioner's cost estimates are reasonable, it is essential that a petition provide, at a bare minimum, detailed information about the basis and validity of cost estimates for captioning, such as competitive hourly rate quotes and associated correspondence from several established captioning providers.¹²

⁸ *See id.*

⁹ *See id.*

¹⁰ *See id.*

¹¹ *See The Wild Outdoors*, Case No. CSR 5444, 16 FCC Rcd. 13,611, 13,613-14 ¶ 7 (CSB 2001), *cited with approval in Anglers 2011*, 26 FCC Rcd. at 14,956, ¶ 28 n.101.

¹² *Compare, e.g., Outland Sports, Inc.*, Case No. CSR 5443, 16 FCC Rcd. 13,605, 13,607, ¶ 7 (CSB 2001) (approving of a petitioner's inclusion of rate quotes and associated

Broadway provides several advertisements sent by captioning providers offering their services, some of which include those providers' general or estimated rates.¹³ It does not appear, however, that Broadway actually requested specific price quotes to caption its programming, as the letters are addressed generally.¹⁴ Broadway provides no evidence that it sought out a personalized quote for its programming or attempted to negotiate with any captioning provider for a more affordable rate. Broadway's insistence that it cannot "absorb the cost no matter what the cost" cannot relieve it from its obligation to demonstrate that it has diligently sought out the most reasonable price for captioning its programming and still cannot afford that price in light of its financial status.¹⁵

B. Broadway's Financial Status

A successful petition requires, at a bare minimum, detailed information regarding the petitioner's finances and assets, gross or net proceeds, and other documentation "from which its financial condition can be assessed" that demonstrates captioning would present an undue economic burden.¹⁶

Broadway notes that it is a non-profit entity.¹⁷ But as the Commission has plainly stated, granting petitioners "favorable exemption treatment because of their non-profit status [is] inconsistent with . . . Commission precedent."¹⁸ The Commission has "specifically rejected requests by commenters to adopt a categorical exemption for all non-profit entities based solely on their non-profit status" and has "chose[n] instead to

correspondence from at least three captioning providers in its petition) *with The Wild Outdoors*, 16 FCC Rcd. at 13,613-14, ¶ 7 (disapproving of a petitioner's bald assertion of the cost to caption a program without supporting evidence).

¹³ *Broadway Petition* at 2-19; *Broadway Supplement* at 5.

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ *Broadway Supplement* at 1.

¹⁶ *E.g., Survivors of Assault Recovery*, Case No. CSR 6358, 20 FCC Rcd. 10,031, 10,032, ¶ 3 (MB 2005), *cited with approval in Anglers 2011*, 26 FCC Rcd. at 14,956, ¶ 28 n.100.

¹⁷ *Broadway Supplement* at 1.

¹⁸ *Anglers 2011*, 26 FCC Rcd. at 14, 951, ¶ 18; *CGB Letter II* at 1.

adopt revenue-based exemption standards that . . . focus on the economic strength of each [petitioner].”¹⁹ An entity’s non-profit status does not suggest, much less preclude, the possibility that it cannot afford to caption its programming.

Broadway also claims that it cannot afford to meet captioning requirements because it “would more than double the cost for [its] program to be aired.”²⁰ The specific budget for Broadway’s programming, however, is irrelevant to the Commission’s determination. When evaluating the financial status of a petitioner, the Commission “take[s] into account the overall financial resources of the provider or program owner,” not “only the resources available for a specific program.”²¹

Finally, Broadway claims that it cannot afford captioning because it is operating at a slight loss.²² But Broadway fails to explain why it can afford to incur the significant cost of operating its television ministry out of its more than \$200,000 in yearly revenue, yet cannot afford to undertake the modest additional cost of captioning its programming.²³ That Broadway is willing to prioritize the operation of its television ministry but not making its programming accessible to all of its community members is not sufficient grounds for the Commission to exempt Broadway’s programming from the closed captioning rules.

II. Alternative Avenues for Captioning Assistance

Even where a petition succeeds at demonstrating that a petitioner cannot afford to caption its programming, the petitioner must also demonstrate that it has exhausted all alternative avenues for attaining assistance with captioning its programming.²⁴ A petitioner must provide documentation showing that it has sought assistance from

¹⁹ *Id.* at 14,950-51, ¶ 18 (citations omitted).

²⁰ *Broadway Petition* at 1.

²¹ *Anglers 2011*, 26 FCC Rcd. at 14,950, ¶ 17.

²² *Broadway Supplement* at 1.

²³ *Broadway Supplement* at PDF p. 3 (marked as p. 1).

²⁴ *Anglers 2011*, 26 FCC Rcd. at 14,955-56, ¶ 28 (internal citations omitted).

other parties involved with the creation and distribution of its programming,²⁵ sought sponsorships or other sources of revenue to cover captions, and is unable to obtain alternative means of funding captions.²⁶

Broadway initially admits that it has not sought sponsorship to cover the cost of captioning, claiming that “[b]ecause [it is] a church, sponsorship is not feasible.”²⁷ Broadway later suggests that it sought “additional support” support from unspecified local businesses, but does not indicate whether or not those efforts were successful.²⁸ Without any documentation of Broadway’s efforts to seek assistance and in light of Broadway’s initial resistance to seek sponsorship, it is impossible for the Commission to determine that Broadway has exhausted all alternative avenues of funding captions.

III. Conclusion

Broadway’s petition does not sufficiently demonstrate that Broadway has diligently sought out the most reasonable price for captioning its programming, that it cannot afford to caption its programming, or that it has exhausted all alternative avenues for captioning. Accordingly, we respectfully urge the Commission to dismiss the petition and require Broadway to bring its programming into compliance with the closed captioning rules.

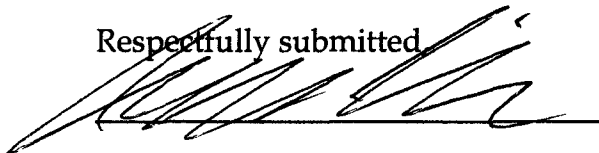
²⁵ See, e.g., *Engel’s Outdoor Experience*, Case No. CSR 5882, 19 FCC Rcd. 6867, 6868, ¶ 3 (MB 2004), cited with approval in *Anglers 2011*, 26 FCC Rcd. at 14,956, ¶ 28 n. 102.

²⁶ See *Outland Sports*, 16 FCC Rcd. at 13607-08, ¶ 7, cited with approval in *Anglers 2011*, 26 FCC Rcd. at 14,956, ¶ 28 n. 103.

²⁷ *Broadway Supplement* at 1.

²⁸ *Broadway Supplement II* at 1.

Respectfully submitted,



Blake E. Reid†

November 26, 2012

*Counsel for Telecommunications for the
Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Inc.*

Institute for Public Representation
Georgetown Law
600 New Jersey Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20001
202.662.9545
blake.reid@law.georgetown.edu

cc: Roger Holberg, Consumer &
Governmental Affairs Bureau
Traci Randolph, Consumer &
Governmental Affairs Bureau

† Counsel thanks Georgetown Law student Hillary Hodsdon for her assistance in preparing these comments.

Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Inc. (TDI)

/s/

Claude Stout, Executive Director • cstout@TDIforAccess.org

Contact: Jim House, Director of Public Relations • jhouse@TDIforAccess.org

8630 Fenton Street, Suite 121, Silver Spring, MD 20910

www.TDIforAccess.org

National Association of the Deaf (NAD)

/s/

Howard Rosenblum, Chief Executive Officer • howard.rosenblum@nad.org

Contact: Shane Feldman, Chief Operating Officer • shane.feldman@nad.org

8630 Fenton Street, Suite 820, Silver Spring, MD 20910

301.587.1788

www.nad.org

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Consumer Advocacy Network (DHHCAN)

/s/

Cheryl Heppner, Vice Chair • CHeppner@nvrc.org

3951 Pender Drive, Suite 130, Fairfax, VA 22030

Association of Late-Deafened Adults (ALDA)

/s/

Contact: Brenda Estes, President • bestes@endependence.org

8038 Macintosh Lane, Suite 2, Rockford, IL 61107

California Coalition of Agencies Serving the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (CCASDHH)

/s/

Contact: Sheri A. Farinha, Vice Chair • SFarinha@norcalcenter.org

4708 Roseville Rd, Ste. 111, North Highlands, CA 95670

916.349.7500

Cerebral Palsy and Deaf Organization (CPADO)

/s/

Contact: Mark Hill, President • deafhill@gmail.com

1219 NE 6th Street #219, Gresham, OR 97030

503.468.1219

CERTIFICATION

Pursuant to 47 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 and 79.1(f)(9), I, Claude Stout, Executive Director, Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Inc. (TDI), hereby certify under penalty of perjury that to the extent there are any facts or considerations not already in the public domain which have been relied on in the foregoing document, these facts and considerations are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

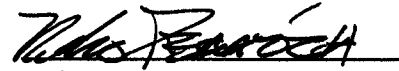
Claude L. Stout

Claude Stout
November 26, 2012

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Niko Perazich, Office Manager, Institute for Public Representation, do hereby certify that, on November 26, 2012, pursuant to the Commission's aforementioned Request for Comment, a copy of the foregoing document was served by first class U.S. mail, postage prepaid, upon the petitioner:

Broadway Baptist Church
710 E. Third Street
Sweetwater, TX 79556

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Niko Perazich", written over a horizontal line.

Niko Perazich

November 26, 2012